IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claims 3-7 and 15-21, and 24, and AMEND claims 1, 2, 8-14, 22-23, and 25, in accordance with the following:

1. (Amended) An estimated price providing apparatus <u>for an automobile</u> comprising:

~~a storage device in which estimated prices that a dealer can offer are registered in advance for respective predetermined choices in accordance with the choices that are set in advance in association with article specifications that a manufacturer can supply;~~

<u>a first database in which an automobile manufacturer's suggested retail prices are registered in advance for respective predetermined automobile specifications that the automobile manufacturer can supply;</u>

<u>at least one second database that includes an automobile dealer's estimated prices that are registered in advance for the respective predetermined automobile specifications;</u>

customize <u>means</u> ~~function~~ for allowing a user of an information terminal <u>connected to said estimated price providing apparatus via a communication line</u> to select an <u>automobile</u> ~~article~~ of desired specifications in accordance with the <u>respective</u> predetermined ~~choices~~ <u>automobile specifications</u> by operations from the information terminal<u>;</u> ~~which is connected via a communication line to allow two way communications; and~~

<u>first price providing means for referring to said first database and transmitting the manufacturer's suggested retail price for an automobile of desired specifications selected by said customize means to the information terminal;</u>

<u>dealer select means for allowing the user to select the automobile dealer by operations from the information terminal; and</u>

<u>second price providing means for transmitting an estimated price of the automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means and transmitting the automobile of desired specifications selected by said customize means to the information terminal in a name for the</u>

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automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means ~~estimated price providing function for,~~ ~~when the article with the desired specifications is selected by said customize function or when~~ ~~the user makes request operation at the information terminal later, calculating an estimated price~~ ~~when the dealer sells the article with the desired specifications by referring to the estimated~~ ~~prices for respective choices registered in said storage device in accordance with the desired~~ ~~specifications, and providing the calculated estimated price per article to the information~~ ~~terminal.~~

2.   (Amended)   The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said <u>second</u> ~~estimated~~ price providing <u>means</u> ~~function~~ provides the estimated price ~~per article with the~~ ~~desired~~ <u>via e-mail</u> ~~specifications~~ using an e-mail message <u>in which an e-mail address that</u> <u>specifies the automobile dealer selected by the user is set as a source of the automobile of</u> <u>desired specifications.</u> ~~in response to user's request operation at the information terminal after~~ ~~said customize function selects the article with the desired specifications.~~

3.   (Canceled)

4.   (Canceled)

5.   (Canceled)

6.   (Canceled)

7.   (Canceled)

8.   (Amended)   The apparatus according to claim 1, <u>further comprising:</u>
    <u>means for providing</u> ~~when said estimated price providing function provides~~ all estimated prices <u>of the automobile of desired specifications</u> ~~per article~~, which were previously provided to the user, to be able to be displayed as a list on the information terminal in response to a ~~user's~~ query request <u>by the user</u> at the information terminal.

9.   (Amended)   The apparatus according to claim <u>1</u> ~~3~~, <u>further comprising:</u>
    <u>means for transferring</u> ~~wherein said estimated price providing function transfers~~ an estimation request of a trade-in <u>automobile</u> ~~article~~ to the <u>automobile</u> dealer selected by said

dealer select function when the estimation request of the trade-in automobile ~~article~~ is received from the user of the information terminal ~~In a process for providing the estimated price per article with the desired specifications to the information terminal~~.

10.   (Amended)   The apparatus according to claim 1 ~~3~~, further comprising:
estimated price updated means ~~function~~ for permitting to update the automobile dealer's estimated prices of said at least one second database ~~storage contents of one of storage areas individually prepared on said storage device in correspondence with the plurality of dealers~~ in response to a request from the automobile dealer corresponding to ~~that~~ said at least one second database ~~storage area~~, and denying update of said at least one second database ~~the storage contents of the storage area~~ by another automobile dealer ~~which~~ that does not correspond to said at least one second database ~~the storage area~~.

11.   (Amended)   The apparatus according to claim 1 ~~10~~, further comprising:
means for permitting ~~wherein said estimated price update function permits to browse~~ browsing of the automobile dealer's estimated prices of said at least one second database ~~storage contents of one of storage areas individually prepared on said storage device in correspondence with the plurality of dealers~~ in response to a request from the automobile dealer corresponding to ~~that~~ said at least one second database ~~storage area~~, and denying ~~denies~~ browsing of the dealer's estimated prices of said at least one second database ~~storage contents of the storage area~~ by another automobile dealer ~~which~~ that does not correspond to said at least one second database ~~the storage area~~.

12.   (Amended)   The apparatus according to claim 10 ~~3~~, wherein said estimated price update means ~~function~~ denies update of storage contents of the automobile dealer's estimated prices of said at least one second database ~~storage areas individually prepared on said storage device in correspondence with the plurality of dealers~~ by the automobile manufacturer.

13.   (Amended)   The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein ~~the article is an automobile, and~~ the predetermined choices ~~which~~ that are set in advance are restricted to customize a backbone that determines drive performance of the automobile as a first step, and are also restricted to select other specifications to have specifications selected in the first step as top priority in subsequent steps when the user of the information terminal customizes an

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automobile with desired specifications by said customize means ~~function~~.

14.   (Amended)   The apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said customize means ~~function~~ executes ~~in turn~~ a selection of drive system components that form a backbone of the automobile which can be manufactured by the automobile manufacturer, and then said customize means executes a selection of wheel peripheral components registered in advance in correspondence with the selected drive system components.

15.   (Canceled)

16.   (Canceled)

17.   (Canceled)

18.   (Canceled)

19.   (Canceled)

20.   (Canceled)

21.   (Canceled)

22.   (Amended)   An estimated price providing method for an automobile using an estimated price providing apparatus comprising a first database in which an automobile manufacturer's suggested retail prices are registered in advance for respective predetermined automobile specifications that the automobile manufacturer can supply and at least one second database that includes an automobile dealer's estimated prices are registered in advance for the respective predetermined automobile specifications, ~~that uses an estimated price providing apparatus and an information terminal of a user, which can make two-way communications via a communication line,~~ said method comprising:

~~a customize step of making said information terminal access said estimated price providing apparatus, and~~ allowing a ~~the~~ user of an ~~said~~ information terminal that is connected to the estimated price providing apparatus via a communication line to select an automobile ~~article~~ of desired specifications in accordance with predetermined choices ~~which are set in advance in~~

~~association with product specifications that a manufacturer can supply in response to operation at said information terminal; and~~ by operations from the information terminal;

transmitting the automobile manufacturer's suggested retail price for the selected automobile of desired specifications from the first data base to the information terminal;

allowing the user to select an automobile dealer by operations from the information terminal; and

transmitting an estimated price of the selected automobile dealer and the automobile manufacturer's suggested retail price for the selected automobile of desired specifications to the information terminal using an e-mail message in which an e-mail address specifying the automobile dealer selected by the user is set as a source for the automobile of desired specifications ~~an estimated price providing step of calculating, when the article with the desired specifications is selected in the customize step or when the user makes request operation at said information terminal later, an estimated price when the dealer sells the article with the desired specifications by referring to a storage device in which estimated prices that a dealer can offer are registered in advance in correspondence with the choices, and providing the calculated estimated price per article to said information terminal~~.

23. (Amended) A computer program instructing a computer to operate as an estimated price providing apparatus for an automobile comprising:

~~a storage device in which estimated prices that a dealer can offer are registered in advance for respective predetermined choices in accordance with the choices that are set in advance in association with article specifications that a manufacturer can supply;~~

a first database in which an automobile manufacturer's suggested retail prices are registered in advance for respective predetermined automobile specifications that the automobile manufacturer can supply;

at least one second database that includes an automobile dealer's estimated prices that are registered in advance for the respective predetermined automobile specifications;

customize means ~~function~~ for allowing a user of an information terminal connected to said estimated price providing apparatus via a communication line to select an automobile ~~article~~ of desired specifications in accordance with the respective predetermined ~~choices~~ automobile specifications by operations from the information terminal; ~~which is connected via a communication line to allow two way communications; and~~

first price providing means for referring to said first database and transmitting the manufacturer's suggested retail price for an automobile of desired specifications selected by

said customize means to the information terminal;

dealer select means for allowing the user to select an automobile dealer by operations from the information terminal; and

second price providing means for transmitting an estimated price of the automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means and transmitting the automobile of desired specifications selected by said customize means to the information terminal in a name for the automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means ~~estimated price providing function for, when the article with the desired specifications is selected by said customize function or when the user makes request operation at the information terminal later, calculating an estimated price when the dealer sells the article with the desired specifications by referring to the estimated prices for respective choices registered in said storage device in accordance with the desired specifications, and providing the calculated estimated price per article to the information terminal~~.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Amended) A computer readable storage medium storing a program code which makes a computer operate as an estimated price providing apparatus for an automobile comprising:

~~a storage device in which estimated prices that a dealer can offer are registered in advance for respective predetermined choices in accordance with the choices that are set in advance in association with article specifications that a manufacturer can supply;~~

a first database in which an automobile manufacturer's suggested retail prices are registered in advance for respective predetermined automobile specifications that the automobile manufacturer can supply;

at least one second database that includes an automobile dealer's estimated prices that are registered in advance for the respective predetermined automobile specifications;

customize means ~~function~~ for allowing a user of an information terminal connected to said estimated price providing apparatus via a communication line to select an automobile ~~article~~ of desired specifications in accordance with the respective predetermined ~~choices~~ automobile specifications by operations from the information terminal; ~~which is connected via a communication line to allow two way communications; and~~

first price providing means for referring to said first database and transmitting the manufacturer's suggested retail price for an automobile of desired specifications selected by

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said customize means to the information terminal;

dealer select means for allowing the user to select an automobile dealer by operations from the information terminal; and

second price providing means for transmitting an estimated price of the automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means and transmitting the automobile of desired specifications selected by said customize means to the information terminal in a name for the automobile dealer selected by said dealer select means ~~estimated price providing function for, when the article with the desired specifications is selected by said customize function or when the user makes request operation at the information terminal later, calculating an estimated price when the dealer sells the article with the desired specifications by referring to the estimated prices for respective choices registered in said storage device in accordance with the desired specifications, and providing the calculated estimated price per article to the information terminal.~~